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THE

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A Discussion by

John W. Simons

and

Christopher Dawson

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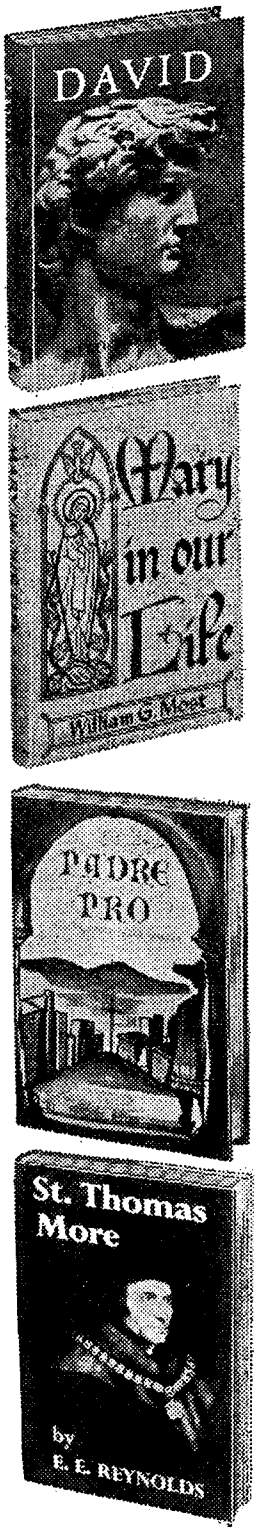


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# THE Commonweal

## week by week

### DIFFIDENCE IN THE EAST

THE more details that come to light about the Far East the more difficult it seems to fathom the Oriental mind. Due to profound differences in religious beliefs, to take one instance, it is hard to explain to Westerners how extreme sensitivity where animals are concerned squares with a laconic unconcern for human life itself. There are cases where widespread depredations of monkeys on local food supplies go virtually unchallenged since these animals may not be killed; yet government authorities have permitted speculation in vital foodstuffs in times of famine and allowed the destitute to die of hunger in great numbers within a stone's throw of well-stocked storehouses.

No doubt there are many aspects of the American scene which the peoples of the East find equally mystifying. They are baffled by our concentration on the superficial, our haste and restlessness, our cult of power, the materialism in our outlook, our desire to make the world over in our two-dimensioned image. Contacts between East and West are multiplying, but the two worlds do not appear to be making much headway in the direction of greater mutual understanding.

One area where some progress is feasible in the near future, and where it would mean much for the future of the world, is politics. And we may take our difficulties with Prime Minister Nehru as a starting point. The extent of our present disaffection was just dramatized at Colombo and Kandy in Ceylon, where five Asian nations have been meeting. Mr. Nehru's "neutralism" has long been known. But at Colombo he went considerably beyond that point. Mr. Nehru strenuously opposed a resolution that would stigmatize both colonialism and Communism as inimical or threatening to the liberties of the free peoples of Asia. In his view colonialism is the only villain.

Fortunately, despite his personal prestige and India's pre-eminence, Premier Nehru's views did not wholly prevail. His chief supporter was the Prime Minister of Indonesia, where the tenure of the present regime is extremely precarious and the Communist Party itself holds the balance of power. (In these two recently independent countries anti-colonial sentiments run high.) The fact that the resolutions finally adopted warned both Communists and anti-Communists not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries is due to the vigor with which the delegates of Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan entered into the Colombo debate.

AS IF this development of Mr. Nehru's "neutralism" were not enough, there have been several other instances in recent weeks which point to his unfriendliness toward us or softness toward the enemy. He would not permit planes flying to the relief of the French and Vietnamese forces to pass over India, thereby imposing a detour of eighteen hundred miles. Without public protest he yielded to the Chinese Communist demand that Indian troops be withdrawn from several Tibetan frontier posts where for years they had been on hand to protect traders and travelers. He has repeatedly protested the holding of the atom- and hydrogen-bomb tests in the Pacific. Only those Communists who are his domestic political enemies appear to have elicited strong opposition on his part.

No doubt this climax to the Nehru record throughout the postwar period has much to do with raising the question whether American aid to India should actually be continued for the coming year. At present writing the matter is before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The danger is that natural resentment of a consistently "neutralist" attitude toward Communism will lead to American steps that would alienate India and other free Asiatic nations still further.

The figures show that American aid has played an important role in increasing agricultural production and raising India's abysmal living standards generally. Projects envisaged for the coming year, while comparatively modest in scope, would build on these accomplishments and contribute as well to transportation and public health. To cut off such



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EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Editor*
JOHN COGLEY: *Executive Editor*
JAMES O'GARA: *Managing Editor*

*Associate Editors*:
WILLIAM P. CLANCY, WILLIAM PFAFF

*Contributing Editors*:
PHILIP BURNHAM
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

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expenditures in retaliation for non-support of American foreign policy would be tantamount to declaring to the Asiatic and other peoples that we help only those who back us up. Such a step would be an abandonment of the effort to build up strong and independent political entities in various parts of the free world.

It is reported that reconstruction in devastated South Korea has now reached a point where living conditions are noticeably better than they are in North Korea. The present sentiments of independent Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan have already been referred to here. The Filipino people on the basis of considerable first-hand experience are highly sympathetic toward the United States. The gulf between East and West is not unbridgeable. That is one reason technical and other aid in the Orient should, if anything, be stepped up.

### THE HEARINGS

THE feeling that the McCarthy-Army hearings are a waste of time seems to be widespread. Certainly, many eminent persons, including President Eisenhower and some distinguished commentators, have expressed this point of view, and it might even be, for all we know to the contrary, the majority view. It is not, however, the opinion of the editors of this magazine.

It is said that the serious business of the country is being neglected for what is called a "sideshow" in Washington. There is little doubt that the public has had its attention diverted from the serious business of Dienbienphu and Geneva. What is going on in Washington right now, however, is considerably less of a sideshow than many of the performances staged by Senator McCarthy when he was in command. That such circuses do little or no good and distract public attention from pressing problems is something we have pointed out before. But a showdown between the Administration and Senator McCarthy was inevitable, and the sooner it is out of the way, the better.

We agree completely with Senator McCarthy's insistence that all concerned in these investigations should have the right to counsel and to cross-examine witnesses. In this connection, the Senator's careful steps to safeguard himself and his associates might well be imitated more widely in other hearings. Although it is probably a vain hope, we would be particularly happy to see comparable safeguards followed during future proceedings in which Senator McCarthy is on the giving rather than the receiving end.

To us, at this writing, there seems to be no doubt that Secretary of the Army Stevens did indeed appease Senator McCarthy until he felt that he could give ground no further. In this course he was only following the previous policy of President Eisenhower's Administration, and it should be recorded in his favor that in the end he did stand up against the Senator's unabashed encroachment on the executive terrain. To us, the very fact that Mr. Stevens found it necessary so to appease Senator McCarthy is a convincing indication of the reality of the Senator's power and of his willingness to abuse it. And aside from the peril to the nation that this picture of personal power presents, do the Republican leaders in the face of these hearings still doubt that Senator McCarthy would split the GOP wide open if he cannot dominate it?

We do not see how anyone who has carefully followed the proceedings and what led up to them can continue to take Senator McCarthy at his own valuation. It seems quite clear that in his investigations of the Army he was making headlines out of a situation which the Army and the FBI had in fact been working on, without fanfare, before he ever began his widely publicized hearings. In his dealings with the Army, as in many other instances, Senator McCarthy was guilty of irresponsibility and demagoguery. Worst of all, he has so performed in dealing with matters which demand the most sober analysis and painstaking treatment. As usual, he has capitalized on the real fears of this nation, and the sum total of his efforts has weakened rather than strengthened the battle against Communism.

In this matter, as in many others, we have more confidence in the public than the Administration has displayed up to this point. Many citizens have

## NEXT WEEK

GRAHAM GREENE writes about his experiences in Indochina.

"The fortified village of Thui-nai was the most impressive thing I have seen in the Indochina war. Here was a popular Dienbienphu made with the spades and pickaxes of local men: a maze of mud walls and firing emplacements that extended right into the church itself, mud ramps standing in the aisle for the last stand. Since August the village, with no aid from proper troops, had beaten off nine night attacks by the Viet Minh, the last on December 30. Everyone who could walk was in the militia. The church was gay with yellow Viet Nam flags and in the square for my inspection in orderly ranks stood the whole village: small girls of twelve carried knives and wore hand-grenades in their belts."



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until now given Senator McCarthy unqualified support, apparently under the impression that he was in fact the effective anti-Communist he hailed himself. But it is impossible for all but the most devoted to watch Senator McCarthy in operation without losing confidence in him and in his methods. The doctored photo, the constant interruptions, the speeches under the guise of points of order, the irrelevancies, the innuendos, the evasions, the personal attacks—all these things together may show the American public the synthetic nature of the McCarthy operation and prepare it for effective action to deal with the Communist threat. If that happens, the hearings now under way will have performed a valuable public service. As we see them, they are in the nature of painful but necessary surgery.

### DEFEAT IN ASIA

WHEN we wrote about the Geneva Conference last week, we assumed that the worst would not happen; that somehow the West would muddle through. We were excessively optimistic. At this writing, the worst *is* happening: the Western alliance is demoralized, and the United States is trying to salvage something from the wreckage.

If the Communists want to end the war in Indochina at this conference, they can do so; if they succeed in overrunning Dienbienphu, they can end the war practically on their own terms.

The situation, in the bluntest terms, is this: It has now been proved that the British Parliament and the American Congress are unwilling to intervene in Indochina, and that the French are exhausted. Unless the British and Americans reverse themselves, China can eventually win virtually all of Indochina in a military contest. Why, then, should the Communists settle for only a part of that nation? Unless the Communists should be so stupidly arrogant as forcibly to reunite the three Western powers, they can now obtain terms which will give them possession of the most vital and productive areas of Viet Nam and at least a commanding negative influence over the remainder. A weak Western consolation prize might be saved by the declaration of a new, internationally-guaranteed line in mid- or south-Indochina, but the symbolic act will have been done: Pro-Western Indochinese will have been handed over to the Communists, allied guarantees will have been discredited, and the anti-Communist South Asian who had placed his trust in Western protection will have received a disillusioning shock.

Why do we today find ourselves on the verge of capitulation in South Asia? The ineptness of French policy in Indochina has been sufficiently discussed in these pages. Self-examination is in order.

Today we are reaping the harvest of a year and a half of indecision, internal dissension, and the substitution of slogans for power. That may seem a bitterly partisan statement. It is not meant as such. The Republican Administration must accept political responsibility for this situation, for he who fails in leadership must pay the price, but the basic responsibility lies on all of us, on our weakness and irresolution, which found expression in the most disastrous aspects of this Administration's policies.

First of all, we demanded economy. The Administration has given it to us with a vengeance. We got a 'more effective' army at less cost through the expedient of reducing the number of infantry divisions, recalling troops from the Far East, and publicly stating that we would never again fight on the Asian mainland.

We got 'more bang for a buck' by substituting threats of atomic retaliation for flexible military power at the scene of danger. Administration leaders resolutely avoided talking about the problems of satellite wars and fifth columns, contenting themselves with the atomic threats, until the time came that our bluff was called. And as we *were* bluffing, we lost. (And now Mr. Wilson rather hollowly speaks of the necessity for an "agonizing reappraisal" of military policy.)

When, at the last minute, we realized the desperate urgency of the crisis, we tried to take dangerous but resolute and realistic action, and we found that our allies no longer trusted our judgment. We found that our domestic turmoil, the concessions the Administration had felt itself compelled to make to extremists, and the illusory psychological warfare of this last year had undermined the trust of the British, Canadian and Australian peoples, and wholly alienated the Asian neutralists.

We have, to put it simply, awakened again to the fact that the world is in uproar, and that no amount of self-deception will permit us to live the life of "normalcy" or win the cold war at a cut rate. Mr. Dulles is not wholly responsible, for he undoubtedly has a real knowledge of the situation and of the demands of power and responsibility. But he has made concessions to expediency. More to blame are those who put cutting taxes and balancing the budget above the realities of our problems, and those who thought that words are a substitute for the military and economic policies demanded by the times. We are today measurably closer to total war than we were eighteen months ago. We are measurably less prepared to prevent it or to meet it than we were eighteen months ago.



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# Christian Culture in the U.S.

**AN EXCHANGE BETWEEN A DISTINGUISHED BRITISH SCHOLAR AND AN AMERICAN PRIEST-EDUCATOR**

*Christopher Dawson's article, "Education and Christian Culture," in the December 4, 1953 issue of The Commonweal, proposed a new approach to the liberal arts curriculum based upon the study of Christian culture. As Mr. Dawson envisioned it, this study would comprise three main phases: (1) its origins in the age of the Fathers of the Church; (2) its development in the age of Saints Thomas and Bonaventure, Dante and the Gothic cathedrals; and (3) its flowering in the vernacular cultures and literatures down to the seventeenth century.*

*By implication, Mr. Dawson looked to the Catholic universities in the United States as the most likely centers for the inauguration of the new program, for he noted that "it is in America that there seems the best prospect for the development of a Catholic culture, owing to greater material resources and to the existence of the Catholic universities."*

*The two comments that follow, one by Father John W. Simons, literary critic who is already known to readers of this magazine, the other by Mr. Dawson, represent a consideration of the problem of adapting Christian culture study to the needs of American liberal education. Father Simons' letter was written after reading Mr. Dawson's article; Mr. Dawson's in response to Father Simons'. It is their hope that the exchange may serve to encourage further comments and suggestions on the possibility of a Christian culture study program in the United States. As a means of encouraging such discussion, reprints of this exchange are available at cost price.*

THE EDITORS.

## Putting American Catholics in Touch with the Christian Past

JOHN W. SIMONS

THESE are some reflections on a projected program for the study of Christian culture in the United States. First, while I agree in principle with Mr. Dawson's idea as expressed in his article in The Commonweal, I think that its mode of development and presentation must be adapted to the prevalent conditions of Catholicism in the United States. At this stage I ignore the obligation to non-Catholics, feeling that our immediate problem is to improve the situation of Catholicism. Now, I conceive that this cultural task must take place on several levels—(1) the level of scholarship and research, (2) the level of high general culture and (3) the level of popular or mass culture.

Before Christian culture as such can be made an object of study, it seems to me that there is a great deal of important spade-work to be done. It is extremely important that American Catholics have a true awareness of the cultural climate of their own nation, of the cultural origins of that nation, and most especially of the Christian European context of certain of its leading values. We have, for example, many scholars who know about the importance of New England Calvinism, of Transcendentalism, of the impingement of the Enlightenment on Jeffersonian democracy, but we do not place these in a context of values which indicates their development from, or response to, values in close alliance with the European Catholic past. They must be made to see that relationship.

Books like Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought,* Matthiessen's *American Renaissance,* Perry's *Puritanism and Democracy,* and Mumford Jones' *Ideas in America* all need to be re-read and assessed in the light of the European Christian past. Catholics have not completely shed their ghetto mentality with its peculiarly defensive, yet aggressively righteous, response to the American ethos. When, for example, a Blanshard attacks the Church, they see the attack as completely arbitrary and invidious. They do not see that Blanshard is the voice of something deeply rooted in the American past, that he must be seen in a context that transcends

Father Simons is a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, who teaches at the Major Seminary at Overbrook.



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the purely topical and contemporaneous. If it is so seen, there is (1) a greater possibility of sympathy with an alien viewpoint, and (2) a greater possibility of meeting the attack on grounds of common intercourse. For the *temper* of a nation, as distinguished from its ideas, cannot be refuted; it can only be altered. And this is a cultural rather than an ideological mission.

Then, too, there must be some way to place American Catholics in more direct contact with the Catholic cultural past—with the English past, and with the Continental past. The easiest and most normal way to do this is through literature, but—and this seems to me of great importance—the usual avenues to that literature are not of easy access. We do not begin to read English literature spontaneously until its idiom has been shaped to a facile usage, and by this time (the sixteenth century) it has become mainly Protestant.

Now, I do not agree with Newman that "English literature will ever have been Protestant." Newman's own culture was rich and deep, but where not patristic it was humanistic in the eighteenth century sense. He really did believe that Addison and Gibbon were the norms against which all subsequent—and antecedent—English literature was to be judged, and he did not see that there were forces at work even in Addison and Gibbon which owed something to a past which they condemned. Dawson himself has tried to get us beyond Chaucer to Langland, but we must go even farther if we are to recover our literary—and therefore cultural—continuity.

SEVERAL attempts at popularization, such as Margaret Williams' *Word-Hoard* and *Glee-Wood,* have proved useful in this, though I am one of those who cannot feel fully in touch with the past unless I can understand the idiom in which it is recorded. Modernizations of Old and Middle English seem to me poor things. They do not convey the past as it should be conveyed: they make it seem unnecessarily flaccid, naive, and artless. Incidentally, I have found Sayles' *The Medieval Foundations of England* one of the best efforts to make generally accessible the kind of material that we need—material which heretofore was hidden away in special studies and monographs.

Much of the work done on Shakespeare in recent years—and I do not mean by those who, after the manner of the Baconians, are determined to make a Catholic of Shakespeare—indicates conclusively a cultural ambivalence. But an even more interesting example of this ambivalence (and this would be of special interest to those working in Baroque and Counter-Reformation culture) is the poetry of John Donne. For Donne's forbears—which included Saint Thomas More and the Heywoods—were deeply involved in the Catholic past and were distinguished champions of the Faith. Marius Bewley's article, "Religious Cynicism in Donne's Poetry," provides a valuable point of departure for such a study. At first glance such a study might appear to be but remotely related to the purposes of an institute of Christian culture, but I do not think so, any more, for example, than I think that scholastic philosophy is irrelevant in a study of Cotton Mather or Lactantius in a study of Milton.

I HAVE written elsewhere on the necessity of placing American Catholics in intimate and fruitful touch with the great works of the European Catholic past—with Dante, for example, with Racine, and with Saint John of the Cross. Once again, the great barrier is language. We insist on teaching languages for purely utilitarian ends, as if we were to spend the rest of our natural lives in airports, restaurants, hotels, or at frontiers with customs officials. In a vast, sprawling, monolingual country such as ours, alien tongues serve, at best, the purpose of holiday travel. Why not teach them, as they ought to be taught, as a key to the rich literary heritage of the past?

I do not have to cross any frontiers to read a book, while it serves no cultural purpose at all to be able to speak platitudes or irrelevancies in a half dozen foreign tongues. I do not mean to belittle a speaking knowledge of any alien tongue, but the possibilities of speaking them are for Americans quite limited, while the possibilities for reading are inexhaustible. Translation is a help, but who has ever managed to convey Dante or Saint John of the Cross into English? For the response we give to the past, if it is to be a true and sympathetic one, must have a greater immediacy than translation—especially of poetry—will allow.

"We cannot understand the classical vernacular literatures of post-Renaissance Europe unless we study their roots in medieval culture." This statement of Dawson is profoundly true, and that is why the study of Latin—especially of Latin at that moment when it is about exfloriate into the vernaculars—is so important. But it is equally true that the Latin of the schools, of the goliards, and of the medieval hymns has had a tremendous impact on the development of the forms and techniques of the vernacular literatures, a much greater impact, I think, than it is usual to acknowledge. I do not know whether the verse of Villon has been examined in relation to goliardic Latin verse, but I feel certain that the exercise would not prove otiose. Similarly, a reading of a book like M. L. Clarke's recent *Rhetoric*



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*at Rome* suggests the idea that the Latin exercises in declamation during the late Empire were not without influence on the medieval *exemplum,* homily, and fable. For we find in them the same luxuriation in the marvelous for its own sake that we find, for example, in medieval hagiography.

OBVIOUSLY, it is necessary to devise some means whereby scholars with their competing specialisms can communicate with one another. It is certainly a hopeful sign that specialists are beginning to feel the lack of a broad liberal training and are zealous to do something to repair it. First, there should be some kind of organ through which scholars can converse. I think of something like *The American Scholar,* with its fine hospitality to the spokesmen of all disciplines. Secondly, a yearbook along the lines of Sheed & Ward's *Selection I* would help to bring scholars within hailing distance of one another. Third, there ought to be some mode of personal contact. Although colleges and universities are natural centers for intellectual contact, our mode of education does not lend itself to that easy converse of minds which is necessary if this enterprise is to prove successful. The modern faculty room bears little resemblance to the Oriel common room of Newman's day. Some kind of national society with local chapters might be the better way. I am not even afraid to say that it ought to be in the nature of a club, so long as we forget to what clubs have degenerated in our time.

You will wonder why I take such elaborate measures to remove these activities from college campuses. Because the study of Christian culture as such is a radical departure from current programs of study, colleges cannot be expected to give wholehearted acceptance to the new program until trial and proof of it have been made. Of course we want the professors, and we would want the colleges to be won over to our program; but it seems to me that the work itself would prosper better in a more informal environment and under less restrictive auspices. Finally, there should be contact through bulletins and correspondence.

EARLIER I said that I would ignore at this stage our obligations to non-Catholics, but I shall reverse myself a little. It would be wonderful if we could somehow gain the confidence of non-Catholic scholars and enter into a fruitful dialogue with them. We can, I think, gain their confidence in two ways—first, by indicating to them that our scholarship is of a high order and is disinterested, i.e., not pre-directed toward apologetic ends; and, second, by convincing them of our moral earnestness and desire for social reform.

This second point may at first sight seem ridiculous, since Catholics feel, and with considerable reason, that they are almost the solitary champions of a stable moral order. But even though we grant that non-Catholic scholarship is often thoroughly secularized and that its morality is relativistic, there is always about it an austere moral earnestness which is the heritage of the Puritan past. I myself always have a sort of uneasy conscience when I examine the career and eventual tragic death of so distinguished a scholar as Matthiessen. For Matthiesssen, who made a desperate effort to be an undogmatic Christian and a righteous American citizen, placed too much hope in the American dream. His devotion to America was religious, was as profound as it was naive, for Christ's kingdom is not of this world. Eliot, whom he admired so profoundly and evaluated so justly, was of no help to him—for Eliot, it seemed to him, was a social reactionary, and Matthiessen identified Eliot's Anglicanism with an indifference or hostility to democracy. It has always seemed to me that if the United States had a Catholicism with an articulate culture and with spokesmen of the order, say, of a Péguy, he might have examined our credentials more sympathetically. In any case, Matthiessen exemplifies an abiding tradition in American scholarship, that of moral earnestness.

On the other hand, there has always been a certain suspicion of the sincerity of Catholic morality. It is ultimately the suspicion of the North European of the Latin. Hawthorne in the last century and Edmund Wilson in our own time responded similarly to Rome—a city of beauty and seduction, of lofty monuments and lax morals. Rome cannot help hovering on the warm and enervating Mediterranean, just as Hawthorne and as Wilson (for all his liberalism and agnosticism) cannot help hovering about bleak and vigorous Concord.

Mention of the magazine, *The American Scholar,* reminds me of two things. In the first place, it is a fairly good magazine through which to feel the pulse of American scholarship. Second, the very name of the magazine is indicative, for, as you know, it is named after Emerson's famous lecture—and I know of no single work by an American which has been so vastly influential. It was for Matthiessen a kind of gospel, and Rusk, Emerson's definitive biographer, says it could



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easily have served "as a prospectus for William James and John Dewey." It must, therefore, be very carefully assessed by Catholic scholars if they would understand the intellectual climate of their own country.

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# Dealing with the Enlightenment and the Liberal Ideology

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

THE key problem of Catholic education in the United States is how it should deal with the whole question of the Enlightenment and the liberal ideology. For owing to the circumstances of American history and the ideological background of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, these movements have become part of the American tradition and are generally accepted as the basis of the American way of life. The result is that, in the past, the American approach to Christian culture has been colored by these liberal presuppositions. In the nineteenth century the form of Christianity that had the greatest cultural importance was, I believe, Unitarianism, and the classical expression of American culture and ideas is to be found in the writings of Unitarians such as Emerson. Nor is this surprising since Unitarianism represents the fusion of the two traditions of the rationalist Enlightenment and of Protestant Christianity.

During the present century this synthesis has broken down, under the pressure of secularism, and the American liberal ideology has again become rationalist and detached from any conscious link with the Christian tradition. The typical representative of this development is, to my mind, the late Professor Dewey, who has had an enormous influence in American education and who was highly aware of the need to make American democracy conscious of its liberal ideological roots.

The result is that the general atmosphere of American educational thought has been permeated by liberal presuppositions on two successive planes: (1) the historical tradition of eighteenth-century thought and (2) the contemporary ideology of the liberal intelligentsia. This has impressed me especially in Professor Northrup's new book—*The Taming of the Nations*—where he assumes an identification between the liberal ideology and Nature in the absolute sense, and declares that whereas other peoples have ruled their lives by social philosophies, ideologies and cultures, the people of the United States alone communicated directly with God through nature. Of course this goes a long way beyond Dewey, but it shows the effects of his ideas on a different, and less critical, type of mind.

IT is clear that these views are a serious obstacle to Christian education of any kind, and especially to Catholic education with its insistence on revealed dogma and on supernatural authority, for while Liberals like Dewey are not hostile to religion in the sense of *an intuitive sense of wholeness,* they regard "cults, dogmas and myths" as destructive of this inner essence of religiosity.

(i) How are we to overcome this obstacle? Not so much, I think, by attacking the liberal ideology as by knowing that it *is* an ideology and that it has no right to set itself apart from all other philosophies and ideologies as something *sui generis* which must be accepted without criticism by every good democrat.

(ii) In the second place, I think it is important to widen the cultural basis of Catholic education, to give students a solid intellectual grounding in our own cultural tradition. This brings me back to my thesis about the study of Christian culture. But here I think the approach must be somewhat different in America from what it has been in Europe. In Europe the Catholic revival derived a great deal of stimulus from nationalism, and in each country it was a comparatively simple matter to look back to the Catholic past. For example, in France one sees it with Péguy, in Spain with Menendez y Pelayo and Ramiro de Maeztu. In England it was not so easy, but even there Chesterton and Belloc follow a similar line.

In America this is not possible because the national origins are bound up with the ideology of the Enlightenment; it is the Liberal, not the Catholic, who can use the argument of national tradition most effectively.

This means that it is necessary to widen the orbit of Catholic education and to conceive Christian culture in its most universal aspects, as the expression of a universal society whose life bridges the ages and transcends the limits of race and nationality. And I think this is what Catholic educators are trying to do with their

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Mr. Dawson's books on Christian culture have established him as a leading authority on the question.



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"Great Books" courses, etc., though the emphasis is predominantly on *medieval* culture.

(iii) The problem remains how to bridge the gap between the modern secular and technological culture which the ordinary student knows at first hand and the unknown world of Christian culture in the widest sense. This is a psychological problem and I do not know what the accepted answers are. Looking back at my own experience, it is obvious to me that the Oxford Movement provided the bridge, since it was through it that I found a series of links between the tradition of English culture I knew and the Christian culture of the past—patristic, medieval and post-Reformation. But the Oxford Movement cannot fulfill this function for Americans and I do not know what the alternative is. It is an important point to consider. There is of course a strong tradition of interest in the Middle Ages, as seen for example in Henry Adams, but I suppose this is rather esoteric and also belongs to the past.

But returning to my first point, I think that an American Catholic course of culture study ought to include a fairly full study of the two classical moments in the American culture of the past: (a) the culture and ideology of the post-Revolution and Constitution-making period, especially in Virginia—let us call it the age of Jefferson; and (b) the culture and ideology of mid-nineteenth-century New England—call it the age of Emerson. If these two were studied properly they would give the student a clear objective notion of the Enlightenment and Liberalism in their American forms and would provide a bridge for dealing with the European Enlightenment and European Liberalism. No doubt every educated American knows these periods well enough anyhow, but I wonder whether the Catholic student has his knowledge of them integrated into intelligible unities.

I STRESS this because it seems to me that the study of culture *in vacuo* must always be a failure, and that something depends on the establishment of an organic and conscious relation between our own inherited and experienced culture and those which we want to study. That has always been the difficulty with the anthropologists. They were confronted with cultures which had no apparent relation with their own, and so they had no inner key to their understanding and often made gross mistakes, not from any lack of scientific objectivity but owing to the absence of any subjective context.

In fact, to understand our own culture is the first step to understanding the culture of the past. From this point of view I have much sympathy with Dewey's theory of education—that it should be a means of participating in the total experience of life of a community. But whereas his community is contemporary secular society, our community is a universal one in the fullest sense of the word: it is the community of the *civitatis Dei*. The whole purpose of Catholic higher education should be to actualize or realize this citizenship which we all accept as a truth of faith, but which we should realize as the membership of a true community more real than that of the state or the nation and more universal than modern civilization because past and present coexist in it.

I feel that most of our educational programs fail by being too abstract and systematized. They do not give us the immediate vision and the direct contact which are necessary if we are to realize the spiritual community as a living reality, which is the heart and center of human history.

OBVIOUSLY this study cannot be separated from theology, but theology must be integrated with it more completely than hitherto. That is to say that in every period we must try to study the theology of that period as part of a whole. The three main periods of Christian culture must be related to the three great ages of Christian theology, and in each dogmatic theology must be related to contemporary mystical theology, which is easy enough in the case of Saint Augustine, but not nearly so easy in the Baroque and post-Renaissance period.

But the final problem remains how are we to reconcile these difficult and deep studies with the requirements of the average student who comes to college in order to prepare for his career in the modern Babylon and who is more interested in football and in the other sex than in the views of Saint Gregory of Nyssa on theology and divine contemplation! Well, that is not my particular problem, but it is a problem that we can none of us ignore.



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# To Believe in God

**"HOW DIFFICULT IT IS FOR THE WRITER WHO IS CAUGHT UP IN PARTISAN POLITICS TO KNOW WHAT THE FATHER EXPECTS OF HIM."**

FRANCOIS MAURIAC

WHEN I was a child, God must have been for me, I imagine, the way Francis Jammes describes it:

And I believed that God was
An old man, all white, Who always
Gave you whatever you asked Him.

But did I really believe this? I suppose I did. And yet, as far back as I can remember, my mind did not of itself rise toward the infinite Being. I believe that when I was studying Bible History, the name of God was vaguely suspect to me, in that the God of the Jews was not at all like Him Whom I knew and loved. Did I know Him then? Did I love Him? Yes, I certainly did, and although I do not know exactly when it was, I believe that it was through the Incarnation that I began, that God Incarnate was first manifest in my life.

It is impossible for me to imagine how as a child, I could have attained to the living God without Christ. It was because someone like me, with a body like mine, with a human heart capable of loving and suffering, someone who as a child was already crucified long before being crucified on the Cross, someone whom I knew, to whom I could talk in secret at any hour, had taught me to say, "Our Father, Who art in Heaven," that I knew and believed that Heaven is where our Father is. It is because at every moment of His life on earth Christ repeated: "My Father," that I acknowledged that the Being whom the human mind cannot imagine to be a living Person.

But Our Lord not only uses the expressions: "My Father" or "Our Father." He also says: "The Father": "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers will adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore Him." Here the simple article, better than the possessive pronoun, makes us conscious of that infinite fatherhood which has been, is and will ever be concerned with each death in particular, each living person, that fatherhood which envelops us all, from Adam to that person, as mysterious as Adam, who will on the last day draw the last human breath.

If I were asked which words of Our Lord were for me most charged with certitude as to the unimaginable fatherhood of the infinite Being, I would recall the promise which the faithful never cease to ponder, the attainment of which they may verify within them if only they will raise themselves from the mire. It is the twenty-third verse of the fourteenth chapter of Saint John: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word. And My Father will love him: and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him."

I know how suspect are the words "experience" and "experimentation" when one ventures on this terrain. Nevertheless how can we fail to recognize that this promise which concerns the saints also concerns sinners: I mean those who repent, struggle, force themselves to remain faithful. I do not doubt that many minds are lifted up to the living God first through use of the reason God has given them, that it was their intelligence which first illuminated them, and that they understood before being drawn to God. But when such people, as often happens, betray an affectionate disdain for me, I remind myself of those words that will not pass away: "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," and "I am the door of the sheepfold. . . . I am the door. By Me, if any man enters in, he will be saved."

Without being able to remember the exact date, it seems to me that very early, from my childhood, from my First Communion in any case, these words brought me to the living God. But when I began to seek an intellectual justification for my belief, when I reached the age at which even the least philosophical of men open the shutters, it was Pascal, between my fifteenth and sixteenth year, who made me clearly conscious of what I had been feeling in a confused way.

I realized then that I belonged to a certain intellectual family, a very large family and one a little suspect. Need I recall here that when Pascal wrote: "It is the heart that seeks God and not reason. That is what faith is: God apprehended by the heart, not by reason. . . ." By the heart he did not mean some kind of apprehension by the senses or effusion of feeling. For Pascal,

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M. Mauriac was awarded the Nobel prize for literature last year. This article is based on a recent address given at the annual Paris meeting of the Centre Catholique des Intellectuels Francais.



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knowledge by means of the heart was the intuitive knowledge we have of first principles. It is not, he says, the intelligence that understands, it is the heart that senses "that there are three dimensions in space and that numbers are infinite."

GOD attained in this way by Pascal, by this intuitive knowledge, is not God the First Cause, God the Prime Mover, He Who by withdrawing would throw the universe into chaos. Nor is He the law-giver, the judge, rewarder and avenger of the weak. The words inscribed on the piece of paper that Pascal wore sewn into his coat said all: "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of the philosophers and scholars." This summarizes a well-known fragment of the *Pensées*.

It seems to me that the essence of the mystery is fully expressed in another fragment from Pascal: "The God of Christians does not consist simply in a God Who is the Author of geometric truths and of the order of the elements: that is the belief of pagans and epicureans. He is not only a God Who exercises His providence over life and the goods of men in order to bestow a happy course of years on those who adore Him: that is the portion of the Jews. But the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of Christians, is a God of love and consolation. He is a God Who fills the soul and body of those who are His own. He is a God Who makes them conscious of their own wretchedness and His infinite mercy, Who becomes one with each of them to the depths of their souls, Who fills the soul with humility, joy, trust, love, Who renders men incapable of any end but Himself."

That is what the living God is. However, Pascal has not stated all of the truth in this matter. I thought of him recently at Geneva: like all the men of Port Royal, and in the spirit of that religious family, he yielded perhaps immoderately to their obsession with individual salvation. When it comes to that drop of blood shed for each one of us in particular, I am not as certain as I was in my youth that it is good to dwell too complacently on Pascal's thought. We are not the members of a small and fearful body of the elect cut off from the mass of humanity. What the Son of Man came to seek and to save is that which was lost.

The living God Who has been revealed by the Son as the Father, as our Father, we know by another name, a name written everywhere in the Gospels, closely akin to all that the Son said of the Father. But Saint John had the privilege of announcing to us (in the fourth chapter of his first epistle—and he repeats it): "God is Love." It is not we who have loved God but He Who has loved us. The living God is love incarnate.

Ask God's true friends what flows from this intoxicating truth—ask a Francis of Assisi, a Vincent de Paul. Or today, in this sorrowful world in which the dominant powers mobilize legions of slaves against each other, ask the question of our clergy in poor parishes (but what parish is not poor?), of our priest-workers, of our Little Brothers of Father de Foucauld, of many Religious of all the orders. Ask it of the various nuns who minister to the poor whatever the form of their head-dress or the color of their veils. But also ask the question of many of the faithful today, of the many unknown saints of the lay apostolate and the apostolate to the workers, and ask the mothers of large families.

If the living God is love incarnate, the Christian life can only be an imitation of love incarnate. How far should we go in this emulation? Ah, no individual is infallible in the interpretation of this duty, especially today when one's neighbor is not only the poor victim whom you assist directly with your alms, whose wounds you dress. For our parish clergy who minister to the worker, one's neighbor is the whole working class—just as during the Nazi persecution our neighbor was the whole Jewish people.

And today our neighbor also comprises the darker races, who are our proteges, whose protection we ourselves have assumed by methods which, to say the very least, have often been far from gentle. Yes, each member of these races is our neighbor, our closest neighbor, when we are speaking as worshippers of the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, Who is also the God of Ismael.

It takes many years to develop the courage to face squarely so simple a truth. We are already well along in years, close to arriving at that shore which we shall never again behold, when the scales fall from our eyes. Then we will no longer fail to see the speciously defended confusion between the ambitions of a nation, the financial interests of a few men, and the command which was given us from the beginning to announce the Lord to all peoples, to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

I refuse to venture further on this heatedly argued subject. However, is it possible to speak of the living God without speaking of living idols? For far from the Baal and Astarte that Israel worshipped there is our own Baal and our own Astarte. It is no longer the worship of statues of wood, ivory or gold. The idols we make are more noble, so noble that there is no sacrifice —that is, no human sacrifice—to which we do not consent for them.

MANY of the martyrs of the first centuries died for their refusal to pay worship to Caesar. But Caesar today demands infinitely more than worship. In the totalitarian countries the authorities are not satisfied with external signs of homage. What they ask is the gift of the person, the sacrifice of one's most secret thoughts. The cult of the Roman Caesar did not imply



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the denial of the infinite Being; but today we know how far the bloody idols of State and Party go in their demands.

But that is the mystery: We denounce the idols of the peoples behind the Iron Curtain and are blind to those idols whose cult we ourselves follow. And yet what strange powers of deification possess the man of our time even when he is a Christian. Indeed have we not deified all that we are? Money, first of all, for certain. Science and techniques, social order, party, working class, a philosophy, a theological system. . . . We have placed them above all questioning, all criticism, all judgment.

The idolatrous cult is difficult for us to discern, for we are scarcely ever conscious of it. Christians who give way easily to the passions of the heart will readily agree that impassioned love for a fellow-creature is all that is needed to hide God from view. And this is recognized better still by those who are dominated by a demanding vice which horribly simplifies their lives. But we find it much harder to perceive how a political, ideological or political passion separates us from the living God.

"Beware, little children, of false gods." That is the last verse in the first Epistle of Saint John, and for many years it appeared to be the verse with the least meaning for us today, since the warning was addressed to the first Christians who were contending with full-blown paganism. "Beware, little children, of false gods." We know today that this is addressed to us. We are the ones to whom this ancient precept is directed.

Have we ever attained to Him, this God? Do we hope ever to attain to Him? We realize how presumptuous it would be on our part to answer yes; we know the price the saints have paid to possess the living God, we who have perhaps not even taken the first step along the way followed by a John of the Cross. But there are more humble paths, particularly that of little Thérèse, whereby so many poor women, so many mothers of families, advance in the spiritual life without even realizing it.

Sometimes at early Mass we notice a housewife with a deeply lined face who furtively seeks out her prie-Dieu. We hear the clatter of her bag of groceries as she lays it down, and then she seems to be at peace. Of course we would do better to pray ourselves than to watch others pray. But this distraction, if it is one, helps us to perceive that things are simpler than we had thought. "Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." This is not an order given to the few; it is addressed to us all.

As the poor woman sets down her bag of provisions and her bottle of milk on her prie-Dieu, let us likewise unburden ourselves of our little cargo of preconceived ideas and doctrinaire systems; let us open our hearts to that love to which we are witnesses in the world. A Catholic intellectual, since he thinks and since he speaks, is essentially that, a witness. In fact it seems to me that this is the only excuse for the exalted claim that we have something to teach to others, that we have a right to speak while others are silent, and to make others listen to us.

The testimony which is demanded of us does not lead us to cry Lord! Lord! in the market place. But each of our gestures, in every circumstance, must supply evidence that we are compelled to judge human conflicts in the light of divine truth. By human conflicts, I obviously mean political conflicts.

Alas, everything is simple, everything is clear, as long as there is only a question of our own interior drama, of that poor heart whose detours, tricks and wretchedness we know so well. There is hardly a case of conscience involving only our personal lives that will not yield to a few moments of meditation and prayer.

NOTHING is simple, nothing is clear when it comes to the problems posed by the course of events in this sorry world and by our conduct as citizens. Politics is essentially impure and arouses in us passions, if not always of a lower order at least with a spirit of anger as their source.

In these matters how difficult it is for a writer who is caught up in partisan politics to know what the Father expects of him, or the Son, Who was meek and humble of heart, or the Virgin, who wept when she appeared to children and spoke only to Bernadette Soubirous. And yet this gentle and humble Jesus cracked a whip over the wicked money-changers; and the maledictions He heaped upon them were what first aroused the Pharisees to seek His death.

And Mary the child of Nazareth, in her exultation over what was being accomplished in her, proclaimed and will ever proclaim through the voices of the generations that continue to recite her *Magnificat*: "He hath shown might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away."

There is a good deal more to this than I would dare to tackle in one effort. It is clear that I do not cite these sublime verses to divert them from their true meaning. But do not expect to find in the life of Our Lord, nor of the Virgin or of the saints, justification for indifference toward the world or its visible history. For a person who is a witness to the living God there can be no doubt as to his commitment; it is not possible not to be committed even though there are as many kinds of commitments as there are individual vocations. And this means that the Catholic witness will give testimony in good times and bad.



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But since he is a man subject to his passions who often is violently partisan in politics, he must never for a moment lose sight of what God demands of him: his witness must remain pure. We must hunger and thirst after justice, but not in a vengeful spirit. We must suffer persecution for justice sake, but not persecute in the name of justice. The pleasure of striking out at an adversary, of dominating, of being the strongest, vexation, anger, distrust if not hatred, all these things the witness to the living God must subjugate within him, if he is not, in the name of God Whom he believes he loves, to serve but an ideology out of which he has made an idol.

No doubt I shall be asked whether in the thick of the battle of ideas which is primarily a struggle between human interests, it is possible to remain as the angels. It was the secret of the saints to act powerfully upon the history of their times and still remain saints.

But their secret is within our reach, and it is expressed in three words: contemplation purifies action. Our generation understands this better than its predecessors, in my opinion. Christian sanctity no longer sets up Martha in opposition to Mary. The life of manual labor of a little Brother or a little Sister of Jesus (followers of Charles de Foucauld) is in reality a life of contemplation. Those who spend themselves as daughters of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Little Sisters of the Poor, or the Little Sisters of the Assumption, do not lose their awareness of the presence of God.

Contemplation purifies action, and why not even political action? To be sure, experience with those Christians who have been in power induces reflections that I shall keep to myself; it must be admitted that in their case mysticism and politics were combined in a curious fashion. But what right have we to cast the first stone knowing what contradictions beset the Christian who is embroiled in public life?

Believe me, the remedy that will work for journalists and writers is that which works for the saints. I am thinking not only of the saints of the calendar but as well of the poor housewife at early Mass who sets down her shopping bags and enters into peace with her Lord. The remedy is found in a hidden life, the Father and the Son dwelling within those who love Them, according to the promise we have received. The real battle takes place within us. If we win that, the errors, the defeats, even the misdeeds of our public life will not prevent us from rejoicing when our time comes to rest. For we will have attained here below, we will have possessed, the Kingdom of God and His justice.

# THE STAGE

## TWO COMEDIES

WITHIN a fortnight, New York has seen two comedies characteristic of this time and place: pertinent illustrations of the retreats and advances, the defeats and strategic victories of the perdurable comic spirit. One is "Anniversary Waltz," (*at the Broadhurst*) a cold and joyless parade of cliché, relentless in its cynical exploitation of the mindless response; the other, "King of Hearts" (*at the Lyceum*), a spirited and loquacious satire which just misses, though crucially, the stature of high comedy. Each has established itself in the public attention, and each has found an audience: what remains is the less simple task of evaluation.

"Anniversary Waltz" does not seem to me the kind of play about which a critic need form an opinion. Nothing in what Jerome Chodorov and Joseph Fields have committed here is genuine except their desire to gull the customers, most of whom have so far exhibited a shocking complaisance. It is only, indeed, by regarding the play as a kind of moral leftover of the thirties—a deserted mausoleum littered with the debris of "Junior Miss" and "George Washington Slept Here" and those other farces with which a prewar public beguiled itself—that "Anniversary Waltz" becomes even comprehensible.

"King of Hearts" represents, on the contrary, a bold and largely successful evasion of the trap into which Messrs. Chodorov and Fields have so neatly and happily walked. By an extravagant display of verbal wit, Jean Kerr and Eleanor Brooke have sought to disguise the sad fact that contemporary life lacks a humorous center: that it is not accessible to the comic impulse but in terms of malice and hyperbole and jeering satire. Because Mrs. Kerr and Mrs. Brooke are so sharply aware of this absence, they have attempted to distract attention from it by polishing the surface of their play till it gleams with an unholy brilliance: I do not imagine comic dialogue of such poise and unnerving lucidity has been heard on our stage in years. For the most part, we are diverted, willingly charmed—but still some hidden pocket of resistance withstands the imposition of the play. And later, we realize why: because comedy must be, in however small a degree, a criticism of life, must establish itself against a fuller background of human action and sentiment. What disappoints about "King of Hearts" is the vulnerable poverty—almost meanness—of the life it criticizes. It is nonetheless, however, a tribute to Mrs. Kerr and Mrs. Brooke that we judge them from so demanding a position: they are two authors in search of a character, and we should not hold them severely to account if the world of their



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investigation does not afford them a wider scope.

This is a production full of energy and high spirits and a genuine contemporary flavor. Mr. Walter Kerr's direction points and paces it brightly, though I doubt I am alone in wishing for occasional respite from so insistent and singly-pitched a tone. As the object of the authors' merciless attention, Donald Cook plays with his expected feline smoothness and expertise; and there are tasteful, lively performances from Jackie Cooper, Cloris Leachman and David Lewis. There can be no doubt that "King of Hearts" has enhanced the season, or that it has brought two trenchant and highly gifted writers to Broadway.

RICHARD HAYES.

# THE SCREEN

### *CHILLS AND STUFF*

THE cops-and-robbers theme is frequently disguised, but no matter how tricked up, it is still the good guys chasing the bad guys. In "The Miami Story," the good guys are a citizens' committee who are rightfully indignant when the ineffectual police cannot end the reign of terror in which a crime syndicate holds their otherwise fair city. The bad guys are headed by one Tony Brill (Luther Adler) who is said to be smarter than Capone in that he doesn't leave any loose ends on which the police can get him. So the good guys hire a reformed gangster (Barry Sullivan) to "get" Brill no matter what technique he has to use.

How this reformed gangster, who knows his way around, "gets" Brill and manages to obtain enough legal evidence to finish off the syndicate makes an interesting movie. Director Fred F. Sears uses a March-of-Time semi-documentary style and manages to avoid too much brutality. The cast successfully underplay their roles so the acting never interferes with the picture's realism. Makers of the early cops-and-robbers movies would no doubt be astounded at the complicated methods (including television) now used by the good guys to trap the villains, but I suppose villains themselves are now much more complicated.

MOVIEMAKERS of forty years ago would also be astonished at how often bad guys are the central figures in films nowadays. I don't mean as in the gangster films of the thirties when James Cagney or Paul Muni pushed their victims around, but as in the new "Drive a Crooked Road," which tries to tell how a


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criminal got the way he is. "Drive a Crooked Road" doesn't attempt to whitewash its leading character, but using a technique similar to TV's "Dragnet," it tells a painful story of a shy, undersized automobile mechanic whose main interest in life is racing cars. Little does he realize when a snappy girl starts making up to him that she is working with a couple of hoodlums who will eventually talk him into driving the get-away car after they rob a bank.

Former-actor Richard Quine has directed the first part of "Drive a Crooked Mile" in a deliberately slow and underplayed manner so that the fast escape after the robbery and the subsequent events become highly suspenseful. The well-photographed scenes in California towns and a fine cast add to the realism. As the unhappy little man (even referred to as a midget) Mickey Rooney turns in another of those first-rate performances that have made him one of Hollywood's leading actors. He is well supported by Kevin McCarthy, Dianne Foster, Jack Kelly and others. But for all its technical brilliance and exciting climax, one wonders at the end of "Drive a Crooked Road" just what this picture meant to say.

BARBARA Stanwyck's latest thriller isn't trying to say anything, and the first half of "Witness to Murder" manages to hold interest just through its interesting situation. Waking up in a nightmare and looking out of her window, Barbara sees the man across the street murdering a woman in his apartment. She calls the police, who find no corpse or even evidence of violence in the man's apartment. When she decides to play detective on her own and goes to the man's apartment, murderer George Sanders complains to the police that she's nuts. Police lieutenant (Gary Merrill) tries to help the distraught woman.

So far, so thrilling. But when Sanders succeeds in getting hysterical Barbara committed to the city hospital for psychiatric observation, the picture goes berserk too—and what was meant to be a psychological chiller, like "Kind Lady," degenerates into a tedious and implausible melodrama.

YOU'RE not supposed to believe "Creature from the Black Lagoon," but you can if you want to; and if you approach it with your tongue in cheek and your 3-D glasses firmly planted you'll have a good scare and maybe even a laugh. It tells a semi-possible story of some scientists (Richard Carlson and Richard Denning) who wander down the Amazon and find a gill-man, something left over no doubt from the Devonian Age.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

***Books seem to be coming in pairs this spring:***

ALL IN GOOD TIME by G. B. Stern ($2.50) and BEFORE THE DAWN by Eugenio Zolli ($3.25) are both converts' apologias—and couldn't be more different. Dr. Zolli, once Chief Rabbi of Rome, writes rather as if he were an Old Testament prophet translated (somewhat to his confusion) into the modern world. G. B. Stern, also Jewish but brought up without any real contact with orthodoxy, writes as amusingly as she does in her novels, and knows the Old Testament as little as the rest of us. Both are wholly at home in the Church, and one was never at home before. Sigrid Undset's CATHERINE OF SIENA ($3.50) is a perfect contrast to THERESE OF LISIEUX by Hans Urs von Balthasar ($3.50), and which is the greater saint or the better book, who shall say?

Two Polish books make the final pair: THE UNSEEN AND SILENT ($4.50) is a collection of personal accounts of their experiences by Polish paratroopers who survived the experience of being dropped into their country during the war to bring help to the Underground. The other is RUSSIA BY THE BACKDOOR by Leon Maks ($3.50). The author is one of two members of the Polish Underground who went into Russia in search of a kidnapped General. This is as astonishing an example of real-life cloak and dagger adventures as you could wish for. Both these books have been held up, but they will be ready on the 24th.

Christopher Butler's THE CHURCH AND INFALLIBILITY ($3.50) (unpaired) was written as an answer to an attack on the doctrine by Dr. Salmon, an English clergyman whose name is not exactly on everyone's lips in America. We publish it because, as the London "Tablet" remarked, "It can stand alone, quite independently of its occasion, as a first-class and positive statement of the Church's claims"—and incidentally, because it is an excellent answer to much of Paul Blanshard's writing.

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# COMMUNICATIONS

### "A BISHOP SPEAKS OUT"

Shreveport, La.

TO the Editors: This Bible-belt Pastor wants to reiterate what you have already stated so well in your editorial, "A Bishop Speaks Out" [April 23]. The great importance of Bishop Sheil's opinions re Senator McCarthy is not whether his opinions are correct. The Bishop's statement establishes in the public record and pierces the haze of public opinion with the truth that on McCarthy *and like issues* there is no Catholic party line.

It is good for the Church that the people of my community come to understand this in the present instance and *for the future.*

(*Rev.*) J. B. GREMILLION.

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: Your readers may be interested in knowing how the nation's Catholic press handled Bishop Bernard J. Sheil's criticism of Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communism. To answer this question a check was made of forty-six Catholic weeklies, using the issue which appeared in the week following April 9, the day on which the Bishop addressed the United Auto Workers (CIO) convention in Chicago. In addition, three of the four U. S. Catholic dailies were monitored.

The forty-six weeklies represent seventy per cent of the total circulation among Catholic weeklies and include all but one (the St. Louis *Register*) of the nation's twelve largest papers. The *Catholic Press Directory* lists ninety-nine Catholic weeklies in the United States, with an over-all circulation of 3,290,000. These ninety-nine include thirty-one diocesan editions of the *Register* chain and fifteen editions of the *Our Sunday Visitor* group. If these editions are subtracted from the total, this survey covers thirty-seven of the remaining fifty-three papers. The results were as follows:

I

Twenty-two papers, with a circulation of 960,000, ignored completely the Bishop's address. They were:

—The national edition of the *Register* (c. 272,000) and all seven of the representative editions surveyed, those in Cincinnati; Nashville; St. Cloud, Minn.; Peoria, Ill.; San Antonio; Lincoln, Neb.; and Fresno-Monterey, Cal.

—The *Michigan Catholic* (Detroit), *Catholic Sun* (Syracuse, N.Y.), *Catholic Herald-Citizen* (Milwaukee and Madison, Wis., editions); *Southern Messenger* (Galveston, Corpus Christi, and Austin, Tex.), *Catholic Times* (Columbus, Ohio), *Texas Catholic* (Dallas), *Catholic Bulletin* (St. Paul), *Catholic Standard and*



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*Times* (Philadelphia), *Florida Catholic* (St. Augustine), and *Catholic News* (New York City). In its issue the week before, the *Catholic News* ran a front page picture of Senator McCarthy, Msgr. Joseph McCaffrey and Francis Cardinal Spellman at a communion breakfast for six thousand policemen in New York City.

—The *New World* (Chicago and Joliet, Ill.), Bishop Sheil's hometown paper.

—The *Observer* (Rockford, Ill.) and *Messenger* (Covington, Ky.) editions of *Our Sunday Visitor*. In the issue examined the *Messenger* did carry a two-column story on Senator McCarthy's appearance before the six thousand policemen.

**II**

Twenty-four papers, with a total circulation of 1,310,000, carried news stories and/or editorial comment. In most cases the news stories were based on a 650-word release sent out by the National Catholic Welfare Conference News Service. This service, which supplies practically all of the Catholic weeklies with their national news, also distributed the entire text of Bishop Sheil's address.

—The *Indiana Catholic and Record,* Indianapolis and Evansville editions, and the *Catholic Messenger* (Davenport, Ia.) ran the Bishop's complete address.

The papers which carried only news stories presented the following picture:

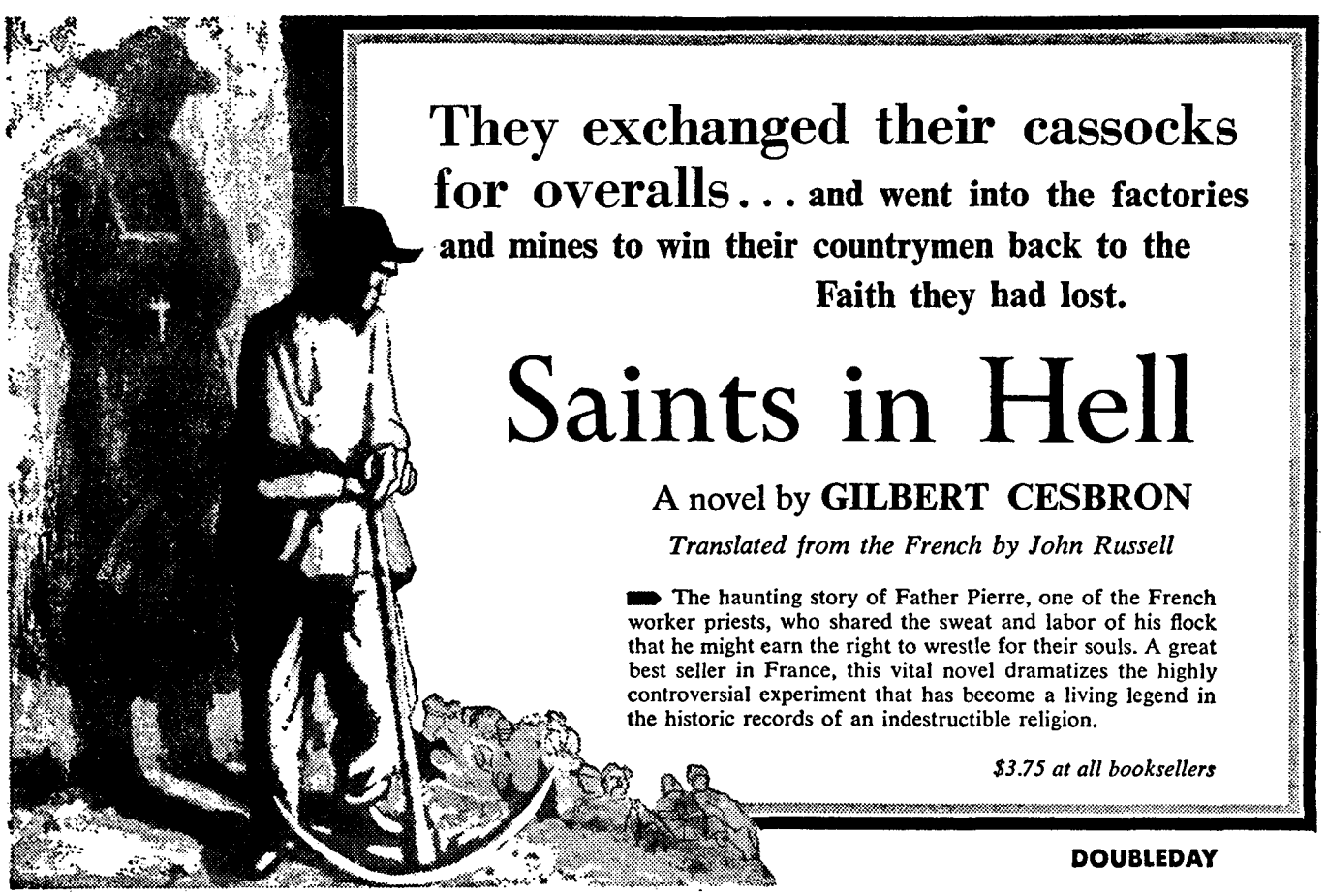
—The *Pilot* (Boston) and *Advocate* (Newark and Paterson, N.J.) put the story on page one.

—*Catholic Action of the South,* New Orleans, Alexandria, Lafayette and Natchez editions, *Catholic Universe Bulletin* (Cleveland), *Catholic Chronicle* (Toledo), *Western Michigan Catholic* (Grand Rapids, Mich.), *Catholic Transcript* (Hartford, Bridgeport, and Norwich, Conn.), *Catholic Standard* (Washington, D.C.), *Catholic Weekly* (Saginaw, Mich.) and *Catholic Virginian* (Richmond) printed all or most of the NCWC release. All papers gave the story at least a two-column head. Some gave it a three, four, or five-column headline.

—The national news edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* had a one-column story on its back page.

—The *Record* (Louisville, Ky.), in its "Opinion" section ran a few sentences from the Bishop's talk alongside some laudatory remarks made by Msgr. McCaffrey about the Senator at the New York communion breakfast.

—The *Tidings* (Los Angeles) buried the Bishop's remarks in a long article, the headline for which was: "Oppenheimer Case Climaxes Controversy." The same round-up story contained Father Edward Lodge Curran's criticism of the Bishop.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—The *Witness* (Dubuque, Ia.) mentioned the Bishop's talk in a story that also quoted favorable comments about the Senator at the N.Y. communion breakfast.

Editorial comment appeared in four of the papers included in the survey:

—The *Pittsburgh Catholic,* in a front page editorial column, called the Bishop's address "an important and badly needed analysis."

—The *Providence Visitor* (R.I) said: "It is doubtful that Bishop Sheil can give a better opinion than anyone else removed from the situation and lacking essential facts. It is just as doubtful that many of the Senator's most ardent supporters are in any better position to back their views. . . . On the other hand, as Bishop Sheil points out, there comes a time when positive steps to remove the economic causes of Communism are in better order than mere exposure of allies and dupes of Communism."

—The *Wanderer* (St. Paul) quoted portions of the Bishop's talk on page one. In a lead editorial it said that the Bishop "has given commercial newspapers an opportunity to exploit him for their own purposes."

—The *Tablet* (Brooklyn) carried the NCWC news story with a one-column caption on an inside page and surrounded it with pro-McCarthy stories. In the same issue the *Tablet* published a full page of letters denouncing the Bishop's talk. In addition the managing editor commented that the Bishop got much radio, TV and press publicity in New York which is "in the center of the Nation's anti-anti-Communist den." "Now here is a strange contrast," the *Tablet*'s managing editor said. "The speaker was, of course, a Chicagoan and the address was given in Chicago. But it seems to have had little reaction or follow-up in that city. The Chicago *Daily News* had an item on the speech on page one, but the other papers put the story briefly on inside pages."

(As a matter of fact the Chicago *Daily News* carried a four-column, three-inch-high banner headline on page one with a complete text on inside pages. The Chicago *American* had a four-column banner head on page one. The *Sun-Times* used a five-column streamer on page one, and in its Sunday edition devoted its lead editorial and cartoon to support of the Bishop. The Chicago *Tribune* used the story on page six but inserted a box on page one with the caption: "Sheil Rips McCarthy.")

### III

The check of the three largest Catholic dailies, all foreign language publications, showed the following:

—The Polish *Dziennik Chicagoski* (c. 25,000) carried a front page story the day after the Bishop spoke.

—The Czech *Narod* (c. 9,000) ran a front page story and inserted a note that the Bishop had not



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cleared his talk with Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago. In its Sunday English section *Narod* made no mention of the Bishop's remarks.

—The Lithuanian *Draugas* (c. 61,000) did not carry a line.

All three dailies are published out of Chicago.

ED MARCINIAK.

### "EDUCATION, APOSTOLATE, DEMOCRACY"

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: Your editorial, "Education, Apostolate, Democracy" [April 23], raises a point that is crucial to all endeavors to reconstruct the social order and to build Christians having the social conscience that their Christianity demands.

I am afraid that the completely pluralistic approach you advocate is not ample for the job you—and I and countless others—would like to see done. Perhaps I can show you my point of departure best in the following sentence from your editorial: "Young Catholics want to be part of things, working with others to make a better world, not huddling together in angry isolation, to be heard from only when some ringing condemnation is to be sounded."

Certainly we need Catholics "working with others to make a better world"—the rebuilding will not come without such mutual collaboration. And certainly we don't need Catholics "huddling together in angry isolation. . . ."

But isn't there another type of "huddling together," one which you totally ignore, one which doesn't produce angry isolation but the very type of Catholic who will collaborate with others?

It seems to me that the Commonweal staff itself is a healthy kind of huddling together. Although at times even you must feel near to angry isolation, your net effect—as a direct consequence of your huddling together—is the opposite to the ghetto complex. Yours is an outward penetration of Christian principles; yours is an effort that successfully encourages many Catholics to work with non-Catholics. In other words, yours is a huddling together that actually encourages pluralist cooperation.

Can you conceive of this approach working among Catholics in jobs more secular than yours? I know it can. I know of some Christian lay people who meet every other week in small groups to discuss some portion of the New Testament and some phase of their everyday lives. Between meetings, in their own occupations, they collaborate with others for the better world we write about. These men and women are personnel managers, government workers, carpenters, clerks, writers, union officials, lawyers. They are "social apostles."

Frankly, I believe that their approach is the key to the problem. As you recognize, we do have many fine


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young Catholic graduates who, when they step into the adult world, do have plenty of zeal. Somewhere along the line they lose it. Why? Is it because they don't collaborate with non-Catholics? Partially, perhaps. But I think the main reason is that they do not get together regularly with like-minded Catholics in sessions where they can sustain their zeal, share ideas, and deepen their thinking on the practical connection between Christianity and their own occupation.

The teacher can help plant and nourish this zeal while the student is in school. Once out of school, the youngster is on his own—too much on his own. I feel you are relying on the impossible if you expect school-bred enthusiasm and inspiration to carry far beyond the first jolt of non-scholastic life (at least in the cases of graduates taking secular jobs). Collaboration with non-Catholics—indispensable as it is—will not provide this intellectual and moral sustenance. Something more is needed.

BOB SENSER.

## "LATIN AMERICA INDUSTRIALIZES"

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO the Editors: I have read Mr. MacEoin's article "Latin America Industrializes" in The Commonweal of 16 April 1954. I see little value in any article proposing that United States capital be invested in a Latin country which also does not treat with complete frankness the vulnerability of the investment to the day-to-day political situation and to the possibility of future restrictions on the removal of profits and/or capital. The fact that certain large corporations have already invested there gives no reassurance to the smaller investor, as the large corporation because of its "spread" can write off a loss in any one country and because of its size can quite possibly influence the political situation to protect itself. Other subscribers who have read Mr. MacEoin's article might be interested in his further discussion of the problem.

JOSEPH J. WALL.

## CORRECTION

*In the editorial "Education, Apostolate, Democracy" [April 23], the Church Peace Union was erroneously described as a Protestant organization. We are informed by an official of the Union that it is not Protestant but interfaith. The Board of Trustees includes Catholics and Jews, both clerical and lay, as well as Protestants.*

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# And He Sang in His Chains like the Sea

THE POETRY OF DYLAN THOMAS. By Elder Olsen. University of Chicago. $3.25.

By NICHOLAS JOOST

NOW we have the first detailed appraisal of Dylan Thomas' poetry to be published in America. Despite the many reviews and critiques of Thomas' work, this is but the second book-length study of it, being preceded only by Henry Treece's equally brief *Dylan Thomas: "Dog among the Fairies"* in 1949. It is good to be able to say that Elder Olson's book, while it is not and does not pretend to be the definitive assessment, is the just and intelligent and dignified appraisal we have hoped it would be.

*The Poetry of Dylan Thomas,* further, is a significant event in this age of America's brilliant, exacting, yet occasionally arid, esthetic criticism—a field in which we have no close rivals in contemporary literature. It is fairly common knowledge that the New Criticism, as it formerly (and successfully) had assailed the old Historical Scholarship, now itself is threatened by the neo-Aristotelian Criticism, the so-called Chicago school of critics. The one weak point in the attackers' armor is their exclusive concern with theory and with work of the past, such as *Tom Jones;* they have not attempted to analyze and evaluate a contemporary play or novel or poem, despite their admittedly formidable theoretical equipment. Here, with Elder Olson's consideration of the poetry and of some of the poems of Dylan Thomas, is their first major answer to the accusation that they have not been able to do what the New Criticism has done in its provision of an esthetic (possibly the plural noun would be more accurate) and of trained and enthusiastic critics for the judging of fresh creative work.

Elder Olson accomplishes a general consideration of Dylan Thomas' poetry and a detailed set of paraphrases of some of his poems, such as the "Altarwise by owl-light" sonnet sequence and "The Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait"; also he achieves this aim by a painstaking use of his neo-Aristotelian system of esthetics. The very titles of chapters tell us that the body of work being studied is grasped and explicated not from a subjective but from a universal frame of reference: "The Universe of the Early Poems," "The Nature of the Poet," "Character and Action," "Techniques of Depiction," "Techniques of Language." The necessary tasks of source-hunting, of sociological and psychological analysis are firmly subordinated to what the author conceives their proper place in his system to be. The problems of mythos, Welsh politics in the Great Depression, a personal religion, and astronomical lore are, we find, important to an understanding of these poems; but we also find that each problem, if solved, will not solve the whole problem involved in a broad understanding of Thomas' poetry. That broad understanding comes, according to Elder Olson, only when we study the poems from the point of view—objective, universal, unified—stated in the *Poetics.*

This definiteness has and undoubtedly will put off the mythopoeic, the sociological, and the ontological (or New) critics. *The Poetry of Dylan Thomas* is, we can safely predict, a controversial book not because of its subject-matter so much as because of its method. Yet the method, *as here employed,* does lead to that broad understanding of Thomas' poetry that the mythopoeic approach, for example, is simply too partial and un-literary to achieve. Admitted that criticism, even as excellent and helpful as this, can never take the place of intelligent and sympathetic reading of the poem, still these comments and paraphrases do, pragmatically, aid in a deeper and broader understanding precisely when we need it in our reading of such a "difficult" poem as "I see the boys of summer." The various poems are placed in their proper periods, early, middle, and late; the differences between the periods are explained; and that primary stumbling block, Thomas' diction, is smoothly dealt with (but not liquidated! Much of Thomas *still* remains opaque). In short, in Elder Olson's hands Aristotelian esthetics is a useful and adaptable critical instrument.

It is too bad that the major problem of Thomas' relationship to Wales, a very complex and an essentially important matter, is not come to grips with, when so much is made of the comparatively minor problem of his knowledge of astronomy. William H. Huff's interesting and worthwhile bibliography is, as he undoubtedly would agree, not quite complete. His item 385—the review by "Winterset Rothberg" of *In Country Sleep* (*Poetry,* December 1952)—was actually by Theodore Roethke, who was using a penname for this pastiche of Thomas's own style.

Let us thank Elder Olson and the University of Chicago Press for a fitting tribute to Dylan Thomas: unlike some other tributes it does not lead us back to ourselves, our feeling of loss; rather, it leads us back to the object, the poem, to Wales singing in the poet's arms.

# The Fate of an Anonymous Man

THE EXECUTION OF PRIVATE SLOVIK. By William Bradford Huie. Duell, Sloan and Pearce — Little, Brown. $3.50.

By JOHN A. LYNCH

EDDIE Slovik was born in Detroit in 1920 and in the French village of Ste. Marie aux Mines in 1945 he achieved the dubious distinction of being the only American soldier in more than eighty years to be executed for desertion. Although the news of Private Slovik's execution was spread



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thoroughly throughout his division, as a "maximum deterrent," it was not made known to his wife at the time, nor, evidentally, was it ever made known to the rest of the army or to the American public at large. Mr. Huie says, in fact, that though he became interested in the case as far back as 1946, it was not until July, 1953, that the Pentagon cleared the necessary information.

Using this information, and letters from Private Slovik to his wife, remembrances of his wife and persons who were friendly to him, of enlisted men and officers directly involved in either the court-martial of Slovik or in his execution—and supplying a running commentary of his own—Mr. Huie, with a minimum of histrionics, has reconstructed the private life of Eddie Slovik: a "dum Polack" as he once called himself, an underprivileged boy who stole bread when he was twelve, left school when he was fifteen, was sentenced to the Ionia Reformatory at seventeen for embezzlement—taking small change, candy and cigarettes from a drugstore where he worked—was paroled, violated the parole, was re-sentenced and three years later released (at twenty-two), was classified 4-F, married and "went straight" for two years, was placed in 1-A (due to the manpower shortage), spent seventeen months in basic infantry training in Texas, was shipped overseas to the 28th Division, froze in his hole on his first contact with the fighting at Elbeuf, later refused absolutely to go into the line, was given a general court-martial, sentenced to death, denied clemency and shot.

Mr. Huie notes that there were approximately forty thousand men charged with "desertion before the enemy" during the war, of which number 2,864 were tried by general courts-martial and forty-nine of this number sentenced to death. The obvious question, of course, is: If only one man was actually executed, why Eddie Slovik?

It is worth quoting here some of the people who knew him or were involved in his case:

Pvt. John Tankey, who froze with him that first night: "He was a poor kid who had had a raw deal. It's wrong to kill a man like that."

Captain Benedict Kimmelman, who sat on the court-martial board: "He got a fair trial under the circumstances, but in retrospect, the circumstances were unfair."

Lieutenant Colonel Henry J. Sommer, division judge advocate: "From Slovik's record, the world wasn't going to lose much."

Harry Dimmick, supervisor at the Ionia Reformatory: "I could have told the general this. . . . When the first shell bursts over his head, if somebody stronger than he is is not there to hold him by the hand, he's going to do one of two things. He's either going to freeze right there in the bottom of that hole, or else he's going to jump out and run like a scared rabbit."

Major Frederick J. Bertolet, of the judge advocate's office, ETO: "If the death penalty is ever to be imposed for desertion it should be imposed in this case, not as a punitive measure nor as retribution, but to maintain . . . discipline."

General Norman D. Cota, 28th Division Commander, who in line of duty approved the sentence: "To thrust an individual, no matter how well trained he may be, into battle as a member of a strange unit is in my opinion expecting more than many men are capable of giving."

Eddie Slovik, obviously, was incapable of "giving." He is a certain example of the fact, still rejected by some, that one civilian plus one course in basic training does not always make one soldier. Just at the time he was becoming a credit to himself, the army took him, but he was never a credit to the army. It would seem that somewhere along the line someone would have figured this out, for Eddie Slovik—and for a man I knew by the name of Clark, who was not much brighter than Eddie, who was killed the first day.

But in 1944, when Slovik went over, the army was trying to fill a gap, and a lot of men were called up who were not going to be much good as soldiers. It is unfortunate that Slovik happened to get caught in this war-time machinery, for it seems reasonable to believe that he never had a chance.



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He was shot because his name was on the docket and the army needed an example at the time; he was the convenient one. He lies now in a dishonored plot attached to the military cemetery at Fere-en-Tardenois, grave No. 65, along with ninety-five convicted murderers and rapists, a peculiar place for a simple man like Slovik. His wife, Mr. Huie says, is still trying to collect his insurance.

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## The Egoist

CRY OUT OF THE DEPTHS. By Georges Duhamel. Little, Brown. $3.50.

By DORIS GRUMBACH

FELIX Tallemand, hero of this novel, is the twentieth-century prototype of the villain. In his veins runs a strong solution of self-preservative, a potion so fierce that it immolates his moral sense. His motivation is to safety, social comfort, loveless but useful alliance. He is a collaborationist, compromising with anyone and anything that seems to insure his protection.

Surgically, minutely, M. Duhamel probes into the life of Tallemand. He begins with his return, after thirty years, to visit his lonely and poverty-stricken mistress. He is driven to seek her out by an obsession of his old age, a need for human forgiveness and his growing sense of the oppressive layer of guilt that underlies his whole life. From this point Tallemand himself takes up the narrative and the rest of the story is told on his own terms, the amazingly controlled, heatless autobiography of the profound egoist.

As a young man Tallemand became the manager of a large and successful drug firm in France. Half-brother to one of the partners, he was permitted by the unambitious and disinterested owners to run the business as he wished, but his will to absolute power was never satisfied by these measures: he wanted, quite simply, to own the business purely on the grounds of his contributions to it of energy and resourcefulness. His drive toward power and possession is so strong

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that it succeeds in excoriating the lives of his wife, his mistress, his deeply religious daughter, his weak, well-intentioned half-brother.

The story might have been the usual one of remorseless achievement in the age of moguls except for the intervention of recent history, the arrival of the conquering Germans in Paris. Trained in expediency, Tallemand has no difficulty with them, and he and his firm prosper. One partner, Winterberg, who is half-Jewish, sells his shares to Tallemand, and with his sons and wife tries desperately to escape the holocaust raging just behind him. The irony of his capture is compounded by a more personal irony; the money for the purchase of the shares is provided by Tallemand's daughter who had intended to use the money for her entrance into a religious order. So while collaboration reigns, Winterberg is eliminated from the firm, and the other partner goes down to defeat before his fears and ineffective despair. His death at Tallemand's hands comes as anti-climax, for before Tallemand denies him his necessary drugs, he has already destroyed him, and everyone else about him, by his rigid pursuit of social rectitude: "Politics is the art of making use of other people while carrying out their instructions."

If Tallemand is villain to this modern fable then Winterberg is its victim, the sad-eyed blood-victim ruined by those who happen, for the moment, to be in charge of the pursuit. But the final victory was not to be Tallemand's but Winterberg's. The Jew faces his ruin only as a thing imposed upon him from without, but Tallemand's defeat is a function of his own wrecked soul. His final insistence upon human forgiveness reflects the author's acute and terrible recognition that his hero's final salvation is now beyond human help. A subtle, ironic and most moving book.

## The Great Things of Man

FORTITUDE AND TEMPERANCE. By Josef Pieper. Pantheon. $2.75.

By LEO R. WARD

JOSEF Pieper has several advantages in writing philosophy. He has the ability to think closely and deeply on the great things of man and the universe. He has a rich background for the work. From his youth up—he is now forty-nine—he has studied and pondered. The field of his study has always been a combination of the immediate, pressing moment and the lore of the Grecian philosophers and of Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas. As a result he can meet our world and our problems—in his view, our now terrifying world and terrifying problems—with a simplicity and candor and relevance that are indeed rare.

Added to these qualities is a style which is said to be one of the finest prose styles in German today. The style is lucid and precise, and at the same time delicate and nice. This reviewer nominates Dr. Pieper for the honor of being the finest stylist of all those writing philosophy today. That is a high honor, when we think of how adequate is the style of Etienne Gilson or Paul Weiss.

Dr. Pieper is a consciously Christian philosopher. He has not the slightest temptation to say that the Christian conception of man is the same as the pagan conception of man. But the Christian, still in the twentieth century, can learn at the feet of the immortal pagans, Plato and Aristotle. This is a lesson that is on every page of Dr. Pieper's *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, translated in 1952, and it is sufficiently clear also in his present treatment of fortitude and temperance. Not to be willing to learn from men whose learning has been so towering is, in Dr. Pieper's view and in fact, a case of obscurantism: yet there is no doubt that some consciously Christian philosophers feel that they are more Christian by a sort of contempt for pagan philosophy, ancient or modern, and for science.

The handling by Dr. Pieper of temperance and fortitude is all the



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richer because he has learnt to learn, again and again, from Saint Augustine's pagan teacher and Saint Thomas' pagan teacher, as well as from the saints themselves. On the cardinal virtues, he says, the Christians have learnt some things that the pagans did not learn. They learnt these extra things by constant exposure to the Scriptures and through a life of supernatural intellectual and moral virtues. All the same, they learnt from the pagans, and so does Dr. Pieper.

This new book is of course more special and less comprehensive than the earlier one. But otherwise it is like it. Josef Pieper is not at all an existentialist, but perhaps he will allow me to say that there is in him something of the existentialist's anguish.

---

# Workers

THE WORKER SPEAKS HIS MIND ON COMPANY AND UNION. By Theodore V. Purcell, S. J. Harvard. $6.

By T. K. KRUG

AS of today, there is some reason to believe that a large segment of U. S. management has decided that workers are becoming disillusioned about their union leadership and are looking for means of asserting their independence. In this group of managers, for example, are those who strongly support the contention that in a secret membership referendum the union organization will repudiate a strike declaration by their leaders. These managers want this "protective" device written into the national labor law. But are they on the right track? Is there truly reason to believe that there is a dilemma of allegiance among workers?

In 1948, the United Packinghouse Workers of America, Local 28, called off a ten-week strike against the Chicago plant of Swift & Co. Forty per cent of the membership had drifted back to work, after losing between $500. and $700. each in wages. The Local was $100,000. in debt. Communist leadership was taking over. Yet within a compara-

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tively short time, an executive of Swift & Co. was remarking to Father Theodore V. Purcell, S. J.: "I don't understand why the workers have gone back to the union in such numbers . . . what is it about the Company that they don't like?"

Why the people went back to the Union after the strike failure of 1948 and what they think about Swift & Co. is made vividly clear in Father Purcell's close study of one of America's great "plant communities." The simple truth is that in the mind of the worker the dilemma of conflicting loyalties is nonexistent. Father Purcell spent eighteen months in and about "Swift Chicago," interviewing 385 of the 5336 workers, shop stewards, foremen, union leaders, and management executives, and his book is the distillation of what he learned about the worker's attitude toward his job, his foreman, his union, his company. The interviews are presented at length and in the vernacular of the subject and it becomes abundantly clear that such business managers in the U.S. as are concerned with the problem of the communication line down to, and up from, the worker might well ponder a simple statement by Father Purcell: "For some of the workers it was perhaps the first time in their lives that they talked extensively to one who valued their opinions and simply listened."

The interviews offer persuasive testimony that—against the fabric of such influences as race prejudice, poor education, a record of company anti-unionism, progressive company personnel policies, a disastrous strike, inept union leadership, the antipathy of skilled workers to unskilled, and so on—the average Swift worker clearly feels a "dual allegiance" to both company and union. He resents any effort by the leadership of either group to alienate him from the other group.

Allegiance to the company is "general satisfaction with the company as an institution," or "general approval of the company and its policies"; it is not complete satisfaction with aspects such as pay, job, the wage-incentive system at Swift, etc.; nor is it loyalty to the company in the sense of strong emotional at-



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tachment or "ego-involvement in the affairs of the company." The basis of the allegiance is first and foremost: "Swift gives steady work, and that is what the worker wants"—in other words, job security. The feeling of allegiance is shared in even by left-wing union leaders and the steward body. Where there is disallegiance to the company it stems from "the feeling of lack of recognition and approval."

Allegiance to the union ("general satisfaction with the union as an institution") is not so pronounced as company allegiance, but 80% of the workers have union allegiance —in spite of the Swift tradition of fair treatment, in spite of the failures of union leadership. Even a majority of the foremen believes the union is needed at Swift. The workers have union allegiance because through the union they satisfy their natural craving for job protection and "status" (meaning recognition, respect, and dignity; being listened to; having a say about conditions). The Swift worker, therefore, looking to the company for job-security and to the union for job-protection, has almost identical primary reasons for his allegiance to both institutions.

Local 28 at Swift, accepted as a necessary institution, does not have the active support of the workers. Only 26% of the union rank and file are "more or less favorable" toward the leadership of Local 28. Among the 47% who are "more or less unfavorable" to the leadership (balance are "neutral"), there are many who consider the leaders "too anti-company," or Communistic, or untrustworthy as far as union funds go, or power-hungry. Yet in the crucial Local 28 elections of 1950, when the left wing and right wing were battling for leadership, only 54% of the membership voted. There is a hard core of about 40 active members (one per cent of total membership) who run the union. It is clear if management has a challenge in the training of its foremen in human relationships, the union must recognize a similar challenge in the training of its shop stewards to the end that they can elicit greater union participation from the membership.

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# Then and Now

When The Commonweal first appeared Calvin Coolidge had just been elected President. The first issues commented on the passing of such symbolic figures as Henry Cabot Lodge and Samuel Gompers. The magazine was also discussing a resurgence of Ku Klux Klan activities, a law permitting public inspection of income tax returns and the election of a Catholic as one of the seven Fellows of Harvard University. Overseas the Dawes Plan and the League encountered difficulties; Mussolini was beginning to consolidate a new type of totalitarian regime.

Since then, Americas have experienced the Big Depression, the New Deal and two costly wars. For the past eight years we have been leading world resistance to the aggressive designs of the Soviet Union. Today Asia is in peril, joint defenses of Europe are still far from complete and there is no secure defense against atomic and hydrogen bombs. Here at home the United States is confronted by a recession, public anxiety has put a premium on conformism, and secularism is growing.

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Under dual allegiance there is dual government in the Swift Chicago plant community—a two-in-one government. Can a two-government structure, one whose component parts seem to be inherently in opposition to each other, survive? Father Purcell does not see serious stresses and strains, nor evidence that one allegiance tends to weaken and diminish the other. He sees the workers as resenting the very idea of a struggle for existence between the two elements: "They will oppose either one in its attempt to undermine the other." He sees union and management living in a state of "harmonious opposition" rather than "warlike opposition" (leading to impasse) or "antagonistic opposition" (leading to continual guerilla sniping). He sees a deeper harmony in the dual relationship growing out of specific action by both company and union along these lines:

> Complete acceptance of the union by management, as "a good and even as a necessary institution in the plant community." Complete acceptance of the company by the union "as a partner and not as an enemy or a threat."
>
> Granting by the company of additional union security, and acceptance of the union as a "legitimate partner." Willingness by the union to stress "a fair day's work" and to promote stable leadership by reducing factionalism.
>
> The setting up of joint labor-management committees to study wage-incentives, work-simplification, etc. Also the establishment of joint educational committees to tap the talent of Swift workers.
>
> The assistance of the company in the union's training program for stewards, and agreement by the union to accept such assistance without mistrust.

There is nothing radically new in these suggestions, but seldom have they been advanced against the background of so rich a view of the company-union relationship. The basic idea of dual or twin allegiance in the plant community has been presented before, but never has it been supported with such a wealth of comment from one such community's own citizens.



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The business executive, shop superintendent, or sales manager who can accept the idea of dual allegiance will understand that there are conflicting loyalties in the hearts of his employees primarily to the degree that he creates and nurtures them. The union officer who can accept the idea of dual allegiance will understand why the membership is skeptical of the platform diatribe against the company, why the membership has no stomach for the class-warfare dialectic. Father Purcell's case-method approach is eminently worth every moment of the time and every ounce of the energy which went into the gathering, correlating and analyzing of the material.

### REVIEWERS

**Nicholas Joost is associate editor of *Poetry* magazine.**

**John A. Lynch is a critic and short-story writer who lives in the Midwest.**

**Doris Grumbach reviews frequently for The Commonweal.**

**Father Leo R. Ward, C.S.C., is a member of the philosophy department at the University of Notre Dame.**

**T. R. Krug is an executive of Bell Bakeries, Inc., in New York.**


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## Personal

A new contributor wrote to The Commonweal recently, after his first article was published in the magazine: ". . . the article culminated in my being asked to write a book on the subject; to write an article for an Encyclopedia; and to write a book review for another publication. So, you see, your magazine is well read."

We do not keep up with all the quotations from The Commonweal and discussions of Commonweal articles which appear in the press, but we are surprised by the variety of publications which use Commonweal material from time to time. They include the daily press, the religious papers, popular magazines, scholarly journals.

In the past few weeks we have noted references to, and sizable extracts from, Commonweal articles in the Des Moines *Register,* the Louisville *Courier-Journal,* the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* the *Saturday Review,* the N.Y. *Post* and a number of other general publications. Among recent articles which have been reprinted are Christopher Dawson's treatment of Christian Culture in the *Catholic Mind,* Father Reinhold's report on the Lugano liturgical conference and Rose Grieco's piece on Italian *gentilezza* in the *Catholic Digest,* Seymour Krim's treatment of science fiction in *Perspectives USA,* William P. Clancy's article on Freedom of the Screen in the Benedictine magazine, *The Grail,* and Anne Fremantle's tribute to Dylan Thomas in the *Yale Review.* The series of articles written by John Cogley during his recent trip to the Middle East have been collected along with the articles sent back by Harold E. Fey to the *Christian Century* and those which Rabbi Morris Lazaron, the third member of the reportorial mission, wrote for the *Jewish Newsletter,* in a booklet published by the American Friends of the Middle East.



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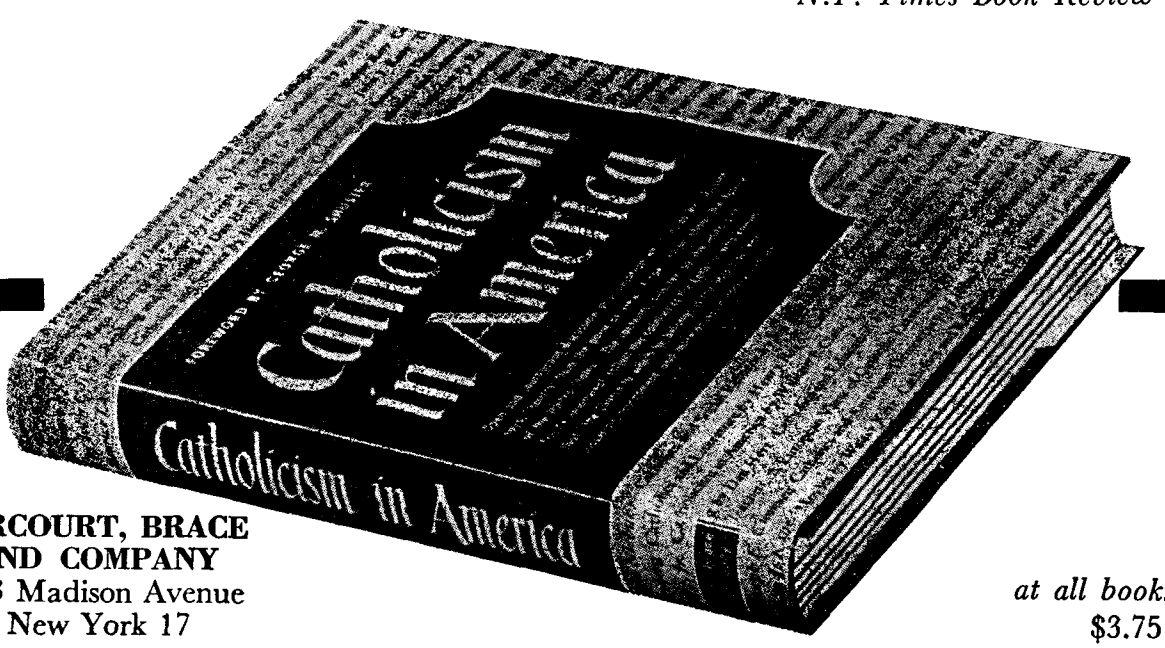
—*Ernest Johnson,
*N.Y. Times Book Review*

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